



INDONESIA: ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 2005

Summary:

- On November 20, Minister of Health Siti Fadilah Supari announced that Roche International had given permission for Indonesia to produce a generic version of the anti-viral drug Tamiflu.
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) conducted a third Polio National Immunization Day November 30, 2005.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a GOI-hosted health summit on November 21-22 at which Vice President Yusuf Kalla delivered opening remarks.
- Indonesian and German technicians installed two tsunami early warning system buoys and a pressure sensor off the coast of western Sumatra on November 17.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a two-day National Workshop on the Implementation of Biological Weapon Convention on November 21-22 in Jakarta.
- The Agriculture Minister called for more comprehensive government action following an Anthrax outbreak in Makassar, South Sulawesi.
- The Environment Ministry's Committee for Leaded Gasoline Eradication says 10 cities still have high lead concentrations in the atmosphere.

Indonesia Receives Permission to Produce Tamiflu

On November 20, Minister of Health Siti Fadilah Supari announced that Roche International had given permission for Indonesia to produce Tamiflu. The Minister announced November 21 that the GOI had chosen state-owned company PT Kimia Farma to produce the anti-viral. She reportedly said the MOH would calculate the budget required to pay for importing the raw from South Korea.

Polio National Immunization Day

The MOH conducted Indonesia's third Polio National Immunization Day (NID) on November 30, 2005, after earlier NIDs on August 30 and September 27. The NID targeted 24 million children under age five. According to GOI officials, the coverage of this round was 95.1 per cent, which represents an increase over the first two rounds. The MOH, World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and Rotary credited better commitment from local communities and governments for the increased coverage. There are currently 295 cases of Wild Polio Virus (WPV) in Indonesia, with the most recent case surfacing on November 18 in Banten, West Java. There are 34 Vaccine Derived Polio Virus (VDPV) cases, all in East Java. The GOI plans two additional NIDs in 2006.

GOI Hosts Health Summit

The GOI hosted November 21-22 in Jakarta a two-day health summit entitled the “National Call Action: Improving Health Status of Indonesian People.” Vice President Yusuf Kalla opened the USAID-funded conference. The purpose of the summit was to raise the level of awareness of health issues nationwide and promote better cooperation among all levels of government. The event witnessed 400 participants from the private and public sector from 33 provinces, including senior GOI officials such as the then Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare Awl Shihab, the Minister of Health Siti Fadilah Supari, the State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar, the then State Minister of the National Planning Board Sri Mulyani and the Minister of Public Works Djoko Kirmanto.

Germany Installs EWS Buoy in Sunda Straits

On November 17, Indonesian and German technicians installed two tsunami early warning buoys and a pressure sensor off the coast of western Sumatra. The installment was a part of the German-Indonesian Contribution for the Installation of a Tsunami Warning System (TEWS) a five-year plan to help vulnerable coastal communities be better prepared for tsunamis. The buoys would transmit data of sea tremors and pressure from the ocean sensor device, uplink to a satellite and transmit to a monitoring station near the city of Padang, West Sumatra. Indonesia is planning to install 20 buoys along Sumatra’s coast by early 2009.

Biological and Chemical Weapons Workshop

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) held a two-day National Workshop on the Implementation of Biological Weapon Convention on November 21-22 in Jakarta. The goal of the workshop was to discuss and promote the awareness of and to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in Indonesia. Around 100 participants from technical ministries, research centers, universities and hospitals attended the workshop.

At the conclusion of the event, participants agreed that Indonesia urgently needs regulations and standard guidelines on biosecurity procedures for users of biological and biochemical agents. Senior DEPLU officials noted they are working with relevant technical ministries (e.g., the Ministries of Health, Industry, Agriculture, and law and Justice) to finalize a presidential decree regulating biosecurity procedures for biological and biochemical agents/weapons. The GOI hopes to release the new regulation next year.

Anthrax Outbreak in South Sulawesi

The South Sulawesi Department of Agriculture announced November 11 an anthrax outbreak in Makassar, South Sulawesi. Officials from the Department said 20 animals had died of anthrax symptoms in the area, but only four cases had been confirmed. Local authorities reportedly established a center to deal outbreak at Tamangapa Village. On November 17, health staff reportedly carried out house-to-house checks, examined more

residents and took blood samples of 11 individuals suspected of having anthrax. Four of them showed superficial symptoms of anthrax. To stop the spread of the disease, local authorities reportedly enforced a ban of livestock traffic in and out the area, conducted a massive vaccination drive that included providing 65,000 doses of anthrax vaccines, and gave antibiotics to sick animals.

In early November, Minister of Agriculture Anton Supriyantono announced that anthrax is endemic in Makassar. However, the Minister admitted publicly that there are no compensation funds for affected farmers. Some farmers in the Makassar area have criticized the South Sulawesi Provincial Government's plans to kill the sick cows because such a step would result in a financial loss for them. The Minister added that besides Makassar, he had also received reports of anthrax outbreaks in Sikka and Ende (Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara). Apriyantono urged the province of East Nusa Tenggara to conduct a large, vaccination drive on cattle, water buffaloes, and horses in the affected areas to stop the spread of anthrax.

Anthrax Coordinating Meeting in West Java

West Java Governor Danny Setiawan held a coordinating meeting with regents and mayors on November 22 to discuss contingency plans for potential anthrax outbreaks in the province. The West Java cities of Purwakarta, Subang, Karawang, Bogor and Depok suffered anthrax outbreaks in 2004. The Governor noted that anthrax endemic areas in the province encompass 60 villages in 30 sub districts. He asked regents and mayors to conduct tight controls of livestock, especially with the upcoming Idul Adha holiday, when Indonesians slaughter thousands of lambs, cows, and other animals. Anthrax in animals remains endemic in several provinces in Indonesia.

Lead Still Found in 10 Cities

The Committee for Leaded Gasoline Eradication (KPBB) disclosed on November 22 it found lead in air in 10 cities, including Bandung (West Java), Yogyakarta, Makassar (South Sulawesi), Palembang (South Sumatra), and Medan (North Sumatra). The KPBB and the State Ministry of Environment conducted the lead test in October-November 2005. According to the KPBB report, Palembang has the highest level of lead in the air at 0.528 grams per liter (g/l), followed by Makassar (0.272 g/l), Medan (0.213 g/l), Bandung (0.117 g/l), and Yogyakarta (0.068 g/l). The KPBB said the ambient standard is 0.013 g/l. KPBB coordinator Ahmad Safrudin blamed the current situation on delays in eliminating leaded gasoline in major urban centers. State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar urged all stakeholders, including local communities to support the Indonesia's bid to introduce unleaded gasoline nationwide by the end of 2005. The Minister told the media he remained optimistic due to the commitment from the relevant institutions, including the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Parliament, state-owned oil-company Pertamina, the automotive industry, and local authorities.

Indonesia's effort to phase in unleaded gasoline began in 1996, and has received significant assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and USAID. In

1999, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources issued decree No. 1585.K/MPE/1999 ordering Pertamina to supply unleaded gasoline to the domestic market by January 1, 2005. Currently, five cities have unleaded gasoline: the greater Jakarta region (June 2001); Cirebon and surrounding areas (October 2001); Bali (February 2003); Batam (July 2003); and parts of Surabaya (September 2004). The State Ministry of Environment has said that for 2006 Indonesia would apply Euro 2 emission standards for new cars, which require unleaded gasoline and diesel with low sulfur content (maximum 500 ppm-particle per milliliter). The decision is based on Minister of Environment Decree No. 141/2003 concerning Ambient Standard for Exhausts of New and Being Producing Cars.